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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, October 22, 1934.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Better Tools for Better Kitchens." Information from Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Do you like kitchens? I do. Especially modern kitchens -- with up-to-date equipment and labor-saving tools. Put me in a kitchen of that sort and I can turn out a loaf of gingerbread in practically no time. Or maybe I'll make you an apple pie. If you insist, I'll cook a whole dinner. I can't resist making use of a kitchen -- if it's a modern one.

Old-fashioned, gloomy kitchens affect me contrariwise. I don't much like to cook in them. I'd rather buy -- Well, I was about to say I'd rather buy my gingerbread and apple pie, but that's not quite true. I'd probably put on my apron and get to work, even in an old-fashioned kitchen like the one my grandmother had.

My brand new mixing bowls are responsible for this kitchen talk today. Before I went down to buy the bowls, I consulted a home economist friend who advised me what kind to buy. She gave me some other good advice, too, about kitchen equipment. I'll pass it on to you this morning.

First, we'll consider mixing bowls. You can buy sets of three or five, in glass, china, earthenware, and metals. Remember, when you go shopping for mixing bowls, that those made of aluminum, tin, and enameled ware will mar with beating, unless you use a wooden spoon. And remember, also, to get a mixing bowl that won't slide around, when you're using both hands to operate a beater.

And speaking of beaters -- the Dover is especially good for whipping eggs, potatoes, and batter. The faster the circular blades turn, in proportion to the revolutions of the handle, the less energy is required to operate the beater. Those with four wheels whip in more air and consequently give greater volume than the styles of egg beaters with one, two, or three blades. Thin, sharp blades increase volume, and whip to a finer texture. The cogs on rotary types should mesh smoothly, and the beaters should fit close to the bottom of the bowl.

For whipping egg whites for souffles and angel food cakes, you may want a whisk beater, with ringed edges and fine wires. Whisk beaters give the most volume of any beater -- although they do produce a coarser texture, and require much more work than the rotary types.

I also bought some measuring cups and spoons, while I was in a kitchen-shopping frame of mind.

Cups come in standard sizes, with or without lips for pouring. In a cup with a lip, you can not level off dry measures accurately. If you buy a metal cup, be sure that it is rustless, and be sure, too, that it is heavy enough that it will not dent easily; you can't be very certain about the foods you measure in a cup that's full of dents. A useful cup for measuring hot liquids is made of a good grade of aluminum -- a graduated cup that extends above the full cup mark. Glass cups are useful for measuring halves, thirds, fourths, and so on. It's a good idea to have both a glass measuring cup, and the graduated type made of aluminum.

Do you know that you can now buy nests of measuring cups, made of metal? Each cup holds a fourth, third, half, or full portion. They come in very handy, when you want to level-off fractions of a cupful, accurately. Of course, nests of three or four measuring spoons have been on the market for quite a while. They're almost a necessity in any kitchen.

I bought a small flour sifter, too, while I was shopping; something I'd needed a long time. A small flour sifter saves scattering the flour, when you use only a small amount.

Now let me give you a word of advice about graters. They're made of tin or aluminum, and come in many shapes and sizes. Their efficiency depends upon the way the holes are made. Punched holes make four rough points which tear food and fingers. Drilled holes are smooth-edged and sharp, either crescent or round in shape. This type is easier to clean than the punched-hole grater, and cuts food into distinct slivers. Whether the grater is flat, curved, round, or square, it has to be sturdy enough so that it will not bend easily.

Well, that's enough advice for one day, although I meant to say something about my new pie tins. I'm going to try them out this afternoon -- with a couple of apple pies.

I'm having dinner guests this evening, and I happen to know that they are very fond of apple pie -- also of roast lamb. So -- they'll have roast stuffed breast of lamb with brown gravy, carrots, and spinach, and some of my little pickled onions, and for dessert -- apple pie.

The other day somebody asked me a question about pies -- why so many women turn out pies that have a hard, tough crust. Perhaps it's because some women do not know that good pastry requires the proper proportions of fat, flour, and water. That means just enough water to moisten the fat and flour, and to hold them together. Too much water makes pastry hard and tough.

What should you do to keep the crust nice and flaky? Work the fat and flour together, with a quick, light touch, until the mixture is grainy. Then stop. If there are a few tiny bits of fat, the pastry will be all the more flaky. We must have a pie program some of these days. We might devote a whole program to apple pie, for that matter. It would certainly please my friend from New England.

As a famous writer says about the New Englander -- when he eats a piece of apple pie he conjures before his mind's eye the fields in which roamed the pigs from which came the lard that shortened the pie crust. He sees the orchard bursting with fragrant blossoms in the spring, and their fragrance he finds before him -- in the filling of the pie.

More about pies anon -- which means day after tomorrow.

